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Dear Professor Meselson,

Very many thanks for your letter and list, which I received today. I have also had lists from Julian Perry Robinson of SIPRI, and I am also beginning to comb the literature myself. Benzalmalononitrile (or its derivatives) have been patented as a herbicide, an insecticide (at least twice), and as a copolymer in styrene-based synthetics. I did know of the tumour-inhibitory activity of some of the BH derivatives; nonetheless, there's still a lot to discover in the literature. It is my hope to assemble a compendium for general circulation; unfortunately I can't seem to get any help with it.

I am interested in the experiments of your colleague Dr. Wegmann. My own experiments on carcinogenesis were only started some weeks ago; I have about 50 animals on CS, plus controls. I think it will be some time before I have conclusive results. All the evidence suggests that CS should be carcinogenic; but is it?

I do apologise for this awful paper - cheap stuff unsuitable for a proper pen.

I don't know whether or not I mentioned the antidote to CS on external surfaces (i.e., skin)? 2-5% fresh aqueous sodium metabisulphite; dab well over affected parts for a little while after stinging ceases, then wash copiously with water.

Did you know that one of the people in the Arch. Env. Health paper (6, 366-74: 1963) spent much time in the CS-exposure chamber? Can you find out if this was the infamous Charles L. Ponte? Also, what happened to the human "volunteers", all exposed prior to October, 1962? I am hoping to exert pressure via the newspapers at this end, with the intention of getting the U.S. Army to reopen their files and examine the volunteers very carefully.

A very Happy New Year to you and your wife,

Robert V.

P.S. I'm Ph.D., not
M.D.